

Inspection of JP Alternative Education

Shooting Butts Centre, Penkridge Bank Road, Rugeley WS15 2UB

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

JP Alternative Education has a highly successful approach to working with pupils who, in the past, have struggled in their previous schools. It uses the extensive school grounds to re-engage pupils in learning and help them to manage their behaviour.

The school curriculum is broad, ambitious and well planned in nearly all subjects. The school prioritises English and mathematics, so that pupils catch up on missed learning. There are lots of vocational opportunities, such as in motor mechanics and hair and beauty, that pupils can study. Pupils love coming to school and do well here.

Strong relationships between pupils, families and staff are at the heart of everything this school does. Pupils feel listened to, valued and safe. The school expects pupils to behave, and pupils know and proudly follow the school rules. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. Consequently, behaviour is calm in school, and pupils are attentive in lessons.

The school goes over and above to provide pupils with an extensive range of exciting opportunities. These opportunities help pupils understand who they are and inspire them to think positively about their future. Parents and carers and pupils are adamant that this school has 'turned their lives and their children's lives around for the better'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The proprietors are passionate about the school and the pupils they work with. They provide effective leadership and monitoring of the school and ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) are met. There is a clear vision for the school. This vision starts with expecting all pupils to attend school regularly and having the right support in place at the right time so that pupils are ready to learn. The proprietors know the strengths and the areas for development of the school. They take appropriate action to address these areas for development. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn in most subjects. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vocational subjects and broad, outdoor educational opportunities help pupils to experience success and build trust in adults. Because pupils trust the staff, they accept support and challenge in the classroom. As a result, pupils are remembering more of the curriculum. A few subjects are not as well planned, but the school is addressing this.

There are regular training opportunities for all staff to discuss the content and delivery of the curriculum with leaders. Staff value these opportunities and are

proud to work at this school. They say that the school is well led and managed, and that leaders are mindful of their workload.

Many pupils start this school with low reading ability. The school assesses each pupil's reading skills as soon as the pupil starts at the school. Those pupils who need them have daily phonics lessons. Because lessons are well matched to pupils' needs, pupils make significant progress with their early reading skills. However, pupils who have progressed beyond the phonics programme do not get sufficient support to develop their reading skills further.

The school uses assessments effectively to identify any additional support a pupil might need and to check how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Teachers, particularly in mathematics and English, are very adept at adjusting lessons according to the needs and interests of their pupils. Teachers swiftly recognise any gaps in learning or that a pupil does not understand something. These pupils then receive the additional help they need. As a result, pupils are more confident in lessons and feel that they can succeed, which they do.

The school monitors behaviour well. It provides effective support to pupils who are struggling to follow the school rules. Pupils quickly learn ways to manage their own behaviour. For example, they know where their agreed safe spaces are and use them. Pupils value being listened to and treated fairly. As a result, behaviour in and around the school is good.

The school is determined to build the confidence and resilience of pupils. It achieves this ambition in many ways. For example, pupils take part in a wide range of experiences. They particularly like horse-riding, mountain biking, skiing and archery. Pupils decide which charities to support and raise money to help them. This school gives pupils the knowledge and skills they need so that they can make positive choices.

The well-planned personal, social, health, relationships and economic curriculum provides pupils with the information they need to keep themselves safe and how to have healthy relationships. The weekly debate sessions help pupils to explore and deepen their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils develop an understanding of, and tolerance for, others. For example, they debate questions such as, 'How do we benefit from living in a multicultural society?' and, 'To what extent does the world I live in affect my identity?'. This curriculum helps pupils develop a sense of right and wrong and pride in their own and other people's property.

The school ensures that pupils get the independent careers advice and guidance they need to help them make choices about their future. Many pupils know what they want to do when they leave school. This school most definitely prepares pupils for their next steps in education or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A small number of subjects are not coherently planned and well sequenced. As a result, a few pupils in these subjects struggle to build successfully on prior learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum identifies precisely what pupils should learn and provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding in these subjects.
- The school has not ensured that pupils continue to develop their reading skills once they have gained the phonics knowledge they need to decode words. As a result, some pupils are not developing fluency in reading or the confidence to read more complex texts. The school should ensure that it continues to develop pupils' reading beyond early reading skills.
- The proprietor body and school leaders are in the early stages of making checks on the quality of some of the subject curriculum areas. As a result, some weaknesses in the curriculum are not identified and addressed in a timely manner. Leaders should prioritise evaluating the quality of the curriculum across the school to discover what is working well and to plan for what needs to improve next.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	148248
DfE registration number	860/6084
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10284437
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Number of part-time pupils	17
Proprietor	JP Alternative Education Limited
Chair	Julian Porter
Headteacher	Julian Porter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£125 to £285 a day
Telephone number	01889 582864
Website	None
Email address	julian.porter@jpae.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 June 2022

Information about this school

- The school was registered by the Department for Education on 26 April 2021.
- The school caters for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from another school.
- All pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with members of the proprietor body, including the headteacher. Inspectors also met with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, hair and beauty, and theology. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the school's curriculum documentation, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their wider experiences of school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the procedures that are in place to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered the suitability of the school buildings and leaders' work to reduce the risks that had been identified.

Inspection team

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